

Freedom and Decision Making Role of Tribal Women: In Galudih Village, East Singhbhum, Jharkhand

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KEYWORDS: *freedom, decision, women, sociology, tribal*

1. INTRODUCTION

In the twenty first century women enjoyed more freedom and power than ever before. But they have still disadvantage as compared to men in virtually all aspect of life. Women are deprived equal access to education, health care, capital and decision making power in the political, social and business sectors. Women work to two-third of the World's working hours and produce half of the World's food but are only ten percent of the World's income and own just less than one percent of the World's property. This limited advancement of women in the formal sectors shows a great disregard for their social and economic responsibilities within the country.

The empowerment of women can be generally measured by using indicators on education, employment status and intra house hold decision making power. In general, Women with higher education tend to have a better position. But sometimes, education alone cannot be the determinant. The employment, convening power and decision making capacity gives her higher status in the household.

Women in India are a gendered phenomenon, which ascribes to itself a number of gender specific roles and functions that are discriminatory and derogative of her equal status in the society. The consideration of women as the weaker sex emphasizes the prevalence of unequal power distribution between man and woman. On carrying out the gender studies in the tribal society it can be easily made out that not only biology but social conditioning accounts for gender difference between masculine and feminine. The proportion of family resources and attention towards children is greater in families where women participate in decision making than in families in which women play a less decisive role. Women who have significant role in such household decisions like major household purchases, own health care, purchase of daily household necessities and visiting to her family and friends have access to resources and power to use them.

Ever since the emphasis of women in development literature in the 1970's, many researchers have argued that women's empowerment is closely link to positive outcome for families and societies. Empowering women actually means strengthening them to confront family, community, cast, religion and traditional forces, patriarchal forces and biases

working within government. Women's empower means having their contribution recognized and valued by themselves and by the society.

Freedom is defined as decision making power within the home, economic and social self reliance, confidence in interacting with outside world. Women's autonomy makes a significant impact on the health seeking & demographic behavior by influencing their attitudes & altering their relative control over fertility and contraceptive use. Independent women in highly patriarchal societies are often subjected to strong patriarchal controls outside of the immediate family and are unable to fully implement their preferences in ways that benefit their families and children. In contrast, women who live in societies that are more tolerant of independent behavior are less likely to face these barriers. Women's status can be defined in terms of access to, and control over resources – be they economic, human, or social – within the family and in the society at large.

In most predominantly patriarchal societies that emphasize women's dependence on male kin, culturally appropriate behavior for women is not likely to encourage expressions of autonomy of either decision making or action. A greater opposition of female autonomy in decision making processes is seen in extended family systems, especially a greater control can be seen over new brides or younger age women comparatively to the older ones in hierarchy. The most important challenge was to distinguish between empowerment as a characteristic of individuals and empowerment as a trait of community participation. Women often face a double challenge in their efforts to gain a degree of authority that permits independent decision making. In this study, mother's education and current age were retained as explicative factors. Intra-household relationships and decision-making processes in many societies are determined by gender and generational based hierarchies.

The understanding on gender and women empowerment is that Gender equality implies a society in which women and men enjoy the same opportunities, outcomes, rights and obligations in all spheres of life. Equality between men and women exists when both are able to share equally in the

distribution of power and influence; have equal opportunities for financial independence through work or through setting up businesses; enjoy equal access to education and the opportunity to develop personal ambitions. A critical aspect of promoting gender equality is the empowerment of women, with a focus on identifying and redressing power imbalances and giving women more autonomy to manage their own lives. Women's empowerment is vital to sustainable development and the realization of human rights for all.

The role of women in society is influenced by a complex set of traditions, customs, and values. Since they hardly wield any power, female face disadvantages relative to men in all spheres of life. In addition, they are often victims of gender-based violence that directly affects their reproductive health, and they suffer silently by adjusting to the situations as dictated by cultural norms. In Jharkhand, 22% of women were either beaten or physically mistreated since they were age 15. Women living in rural areas and with low-income levels are more likely to experience domestic violence than women living in urban areas. The female population of Jharkhand is 16,034,550 respectively. The condition of tribal women in Jharkhand is 'pathetic'. Though women do over 90% of work to sustain life, 90% decisions are taken by men. The roles that men and women play in society are not biologically determined — they are socially determined, changing and changeable. Although they may be justified as being required by culture or religion, these roles vary widely by locality and change over time.

We do believe that lasting change can only be achieved when women have access to knowledge, skills and resources. Therefore we aim-

Creating an environment through positive economic and social changes for full development of women to enable them to realize their full potential

All human rights and fundamental freedom by women on equal basis with men in all spheres—education, economic, social, cultural and civil.

Equal access to participation and decision making of women in social, cultural and economic life of the nation.

Equal access to women to health care, quality education at all levels, career and vocational guidance, employment, equal remuneration, occupational health and safety, social security and public office etc.

Strengthening legal systems aimed at elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.

We also emphasize on "Convention on the Elimination of all forms of discrimination against women" of Article 3.

Women are entitled to the equal enjoyment and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil, or any other field. These rights are follows-

- A. The right to life
- B. The right to equality;
- C. The right to liberty and security of person;
- D. The right to equal protection under the law;
- E. The right to be free from all forms of discrimination;
- F. The right to the highest standard attainable of physical and mental health;
- G. The right to just and favorable conditions of work;
- H. The right not to be subjected to torture, or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

The Gender equality is the first and foremost, human rights. Women are entitled to live in dignity and in freedom from want and from fear. Empowering women is also an indispensable tool for advancing development and reducing poverty. Empowered women contribute to the health and productivity of whole family and communities to improved prospects for the next generation. The importance of gender equality is underscored by its inclusion as one of the eight Millennium Development Goals. Gender equality is acknowledged as being a key to achieving the other seven goals. Yet discrimination

Against women and girls – including gender – based violence, economic discrimination, reproductive health inequalities and harmful traditional practices - remains the most pervasive and persistent form of inequality. Women and girls bear enormous hardship in their day today life.

The status of tribal women in Jharkhand presents a unique picture. The traditional tribal norms for women are somewhat liberal and they certainly have more freedom than their Hindu counterpart. They can roam around in the forests, fields and markets, can talk and joke with men without reproach. Institution of youth dormitory also gives considerable amount of freedom to girls. Hence, not only they enjoy mingling with opposite sex but also learn the various skills like dance and music. Tribal women are free to select their own life-partners. They are generally not subjected to early child-bearing. They are free to divorce their husbands. In the tribal society, widowhood does not carry any stigma, as it does in the non-tribal society. The custom of bride~ price itself is considered to be a mark of respect and positive value for tribal women. It is a fact that women work shoulder to shoulder with men and contribute substantially in economic activities, but they are deprived of inheriting landed property. This is because the tribals have patrilineal system and the land is generally owned by the whole clan. Women are excluded from the traditional political organisations of tribes and they cannot hold the office of priest. Decision-making and imparting of justice were not considered as important aspects of their life. They lead a very hard life because they are being treated as an economic asset, a valuable property, which can be acquired by proper payment of bride-price. A custom of Dark Age, that's branding a woman as a witch, and then to kill her, still exists in Jharkhand.

Though a new middle class is emerging, among the tribes of Jharkhand, due to education, reservation and contacts with the wider society, this process is slow and the intensity of success is also very low. These measures have not reached to the majority of tribal women. The process of gender discrimination is quite subtle in the tribal society. Gender is an important component in the system of stratification in the tribal society. The present study aims to understand the gender stratification among the tribal women of different strata and categories.

The Constitution grants equality of opportunity and status to tribal women, but they lag behind in every sphere, including education, employment, health etc. There is a clear disparity in the literacy rate between men and women. The female literacy is 14.50%, which is much lower than the male literacy rate 32.50%. The general female literacy rate in 1991 census (39.29%) is much higher than the overall literacy among the tribes of Jharkhand.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION:-

- **Decision making:** It can be act or opinion of choice. It can be regarded as mental process (cognitive process) resulting in selection of course of action among alternative scenario.
- **Freedom:** Independence or autonomy, as of the will or one's action. (dictionary definition)
- **Women empowerment:** A "bottom up" process of transforming gender power relation, through individual or group developing awareness of sub ordination and building their capacity to challenge it.
- **Gender Disparities:** The inequality between male and females.
- **Gender role:** It refers to the role of females. The social ideas beliefs and practices as per which a female position in society is decided. (Oxford dictionary definition)

OBJECTIVE:

- The study aims at freedom and decision making role of tribal women of Galudih village (Purbi Singhbhum district). The study comes to sharper focus on the following specific objectives:-
- To find economic decision making ability.
- To find extent of decision making regarding child birth or pregnancy.
- To find socio-economic status among tribal women.
- To find the level of education gained by tribal women.
- To find level of empowerment.
- To examine the status of women in their family (Marital life, role in family) properly rights.

RATIONAL OF THE STUDY:

Women constitute about half of the world population and play a crucial role in socio-economic context of the society. Therefore development of the nation in true sense can hardly be achieved without proper development and empowerment of women's. Modernization and development process is affecting both men and women life differently. Gender Disparities is seen in each and every societies and it's the social and cultural norms which validates the status of women in a society. Culture is transferred from one generation to another, and so also the gender role. (Transferred with culture). Therefore it is most essential in present context to know and identify the various factor that determines the status of women in a society and role of these factor's in empowerment of women as no society can develop ignoring its half of the population.

Women in countries such as India, Egypt, and Bangladesh are governed by social norms that restrict their physical mobility, referred to in the literature as female seclusion. This seclusion involves the veiling of head and face in some instances, as well as restrictions on unaccompanied travel to such places as shops, pharmacies, or hospitals, and limits on direct contact with unrelated males (Bruce, Lloyd, and Leonard, 1995). Many factors are found to affect the ability of women to take part in decision making process in household or stepping out of their house and decide for purchasing, use the money efficiently and also deciding for own health. The third Millennium Development Goal aims to promote gender equality & empower women employment and education. This paper makes an attempt in figuring out the factors affecting the decision making processes and female autonomy in tribal context.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK:-

Many studies have concentrated on the socio economic status of women in tribal society. The present review limits itself to the studies related to the livelihood generation, community participation and decision making role of tribal women.

The review of literature for the study has been done referring to different journals and studies done by individuals to show relevance to the current study.

Arun Kumar (2003) stated that even if government is undertaking various development programmes, it fails to reach its goal. Lack of awareness, control of economic resources, family problems, traditional values are various factor hindering the women empowerment.

Pesses (2000) concluded that international women rights has led to increase women participation in community development but has not promoted women's role in community development decision making process.

Mangathai's (2001) study revealed that reservation policy of 73rd Amendment have created favorable environment for women. The husbands motivate and support their counter parts but still they play a vital role in influencing women. Most of their decision was influenced by their husbands.

Awias, Aslam and Asif (2009) stated that tribal women have major role in co-management of their natural, social and economic resources. But still they suffer a lot; they are backward due to a traditional outlook, illiteracy, superstition, and submissive role in decision making, social evils and many other cultural factors.

Sudan K Failendra (2007) concluded in his studies that women have great potential and provided with assistance with micro financing, giving full autonomy in their work, has resulted in increased income and improved livelihood.

Khan (2001) says that women's role in decision making process is an important factor and needs to be considered for woman empowerment. Mainstreaming of women through gender specific policies is a necessary precondition for meaningful development. There is a lacuna between gender specific policies and reform agenda. He pointed out that government policies like reservation of seats, can promote empowerment and women access to development projects numerically but not practically.

The main reason behind low participation and decision making process are illiteracy, patriarchy, lack of clarity in government policies for empowerment. The meaningful participation can be ensured through awareness; monitoring of woman status on regular basis; research activities on woman participation in social sphere, their voting right. Importance should be given to qualitative participation rather than quantitative representation.

Mitra (2007) has analyzed the status of women among schedule tribes in India with comparison to main stream Hindus, in term of social and cultural practices. The study shows that isolation from main stream population for many years have been actually helped, tribal community to provide relatively high status of tribal women and there is absolutely no gender discrimination in many tribal communities. It may have occurred due to assimilation of many tribal group with main stream Hindu culture and tradition.

Bhasin (2007) has carried out her study about tribal women in different geographic region i.e. Ladhak, North Eastern Region, Rajasthan and her findings show that the tribal women possess a lot of importance in tribal communities. Even the tribal communities of Rajasthan do not look upon the birth of girl child as a curse. Dowry system is not there. The girl possesses the right to choose her husband. Divorces are easy and well secured. Women play vital role in economic activities. They take joint decision along with the male counterparts.

The study also reveals that women power is not extended to societal or political sphere. Their economic power is not translated in to corresponding community authority. Women supremacy is restricted with household domain and due credit and importance is not given at official level. Women have secondary importance in public affair and community decision making.

Majumdar's (1984) study reviews women empowerment through Panchayati Raj. The study was based on the fact that the active participation of women, on equal terms with men, at all level of decision-making is essential to the achievement of equality, sustainable development, peace and democracy.

He observed that the participation of women is low in term of number and quality. Most of the participants are over the age of 50 and belong to high class families. The political awareness among the tribal population is below the mark.

In a Yojana (1987) study it is revealed that women's contribution was generally found in two fields: at the household level and at the agricultural field. Their contribution is more than half to the economy but as their contribution is indirect, it has been often ignored by the society from time immemorial. They are not engaged on other sectors due to lack of skills and training required for other sectors. Yet the women play a vital role and cannot be ignored.

Gurnug (1998) suggests that the social and economic status of tribal women is low because of social hierarchy and economic deprivation. The difference in land holding, food security, allocation of resources and role in decision making affects and determines their socio economic status.

The study reveals that among tribal women decision making pattern indicate that the major financial decision are taken by men where as food sharing and other decision were taken solely by women or jointly with men.

2. METHODOLOGY:-

Research is a systematized body of knowledge. It is marketed by accurate classification of facts, discovery of new facts and logical conclusion. The reliability and validity of research findings depend upon methodological framework employed. Therefore the present chapter has been planned to elaborate methodological procedure adopted and various analytical techniques employed in achieving the set objectives of the present study on "Freedom and Decision Making Role among Tribal Women: In Galhudi Village In East Singhbhum District".

The collection of primary data was contained to a single block in East Singhbhum district of the 10 block in the district, Ghatshila block was selected purposefully due to the following reasons-

1. Ghatshila is the largest block in East Singhbhum district in terms of geographical area (3,533 km 2).

2. Population of the tribal's is highest in Ghatshila, represented by all communities in the district.
3. Large scale deforestation has occurred in the block for mines.

Universe of the study:-

The Purbi Singhbhum district has an area of 3,533 km 2, and a population of 2,291,032 (as of census 2011). It is surrounded by Paschim Mednipur district in east and Purulia district is to the north. West Singhbhum district to the west. Mayurbhanj district of Odisha on the south. In Purbi Singhbhum district total 11 blocks, 1609 villages.

Unit of the study:-

In Ghatshila block 150 villages, out of Galudi has been selected for present study.

Sample size:-

The Purbi Singhbhum district has been purposively selected for conducting the present study. From this district, Galudi village in Ghatshila block has been chosen for the present analysis. This village total household is 106 (according to census 2011). The village is occupied by schedule tribe. The total sample size is of the household selected for this study is 30.

Sampling method:-

Sample selected through simple random sampling method.

Tools of Data collection:-

- Primary data: - Primary data will be collecting through survey, personal interview and observation.
- Secondary data: -Secondary data will be collecting through journals, books, magazine, newspaper, libraries, and internet.

Tools and Techniques:-

The study is quantitative in nature

1. Data Collection:-

The present study was based on primary data, collected from each household, relating to various parameters of socio-economic status and decision making role, through well designed and structured questionnaire and interviews.

The details of primary data pointers are given below:

- Demographic features (age, education, marital status)
- Assets holding and Ownership rights (land holding, productive and non productive asset)
- Employment
- Expenditure patterns
- Social Participation
- Women freedom

Research Design:-

The thesis is total five chapters. The first chapter is background, review of the literature, methodology, limitation of the study. Chapter two provides an overview of the tribal development and the socio-economic status of the tribal communities in Jharkhand. Next chapter contains the profile of the study area and the selected tribal's communities, covering the early history, decision making role of the women of the District. This chapter also covers the status of women, decision level, employment status, of the selected tribal communities.

The next chapter gives a macro view of the freedom and decision making role of tribal women in Jharkhand. To supplements the above, a micro level analysis of the present socio-economic status and decision making role of the

women of the selected communities based on the data gathered from the sample is done. The summary of the major findings and conclusion of the study are brought together in the chapter.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

1. Decision Making Role of Tribal Women:-

The power to take decisions is extremely important from the view point of empowerment of women because it is often seen that their voice is not properly listened. The decision making power of women should not be ignored. The real development cannot take place without active participation of women. So in the present study, the involvement of women in decision making in the economic and social spheres, both at household and community level was examined.

Economic Decision:-

Results shows that decision pertaining to minor economic matters i.e. daily family expenses and their personal needs were generally taken independently by women. But the major financial decisions relating to investment, savings are taken mostly by mutual consent. The patriarchal social setting of the study area could perhaps be attributed to the male dominance in the economic related matters. Husband and wife jointly decided major financial matters. Women play passive role of decision making in economic affairs.

The major financial decisions are taken by male. This may be because; females of this hamlet do not have any permanent source of income and lack ownership right. Therefore it is one important factor that gives them a say over financial decisions.

Table:-1 Percentage Distribution of Women by Decision Making Relating to Economic Aspects

Decision Taken By	Decision of daily expenditure	Percentage
HUSBAND ONLY(ALWAYS)	1	3%
HUSBAND ONLY(RARELY)	1	3%
OTHER FAMILY MEMBER(MOST OFTEN)	1	3%
OTHER FAMILY MEMBER(SOMETIMES)	2	7%
RESPONDENT ONLY(ALWAYS)	4	13%
RESPONDENT ONLY(MOST OFTEN)	3	10%
RESPONDENT ONLY(SOMETIMES)	2	7%
TOGETHER(ALWAYS)	12	40%
TOGETHER(MOST OFTEN)	1	3%
TOGETHER(SOMETIMES)	3	10%
Grand Total	30	100%
Major finance (Savings)		
Decision Taken By	Decision of monthly savings	Percentage
HUSBAND ONLY(ALWAYS)	2	7%
HUSBAND ONLY(MOST OFTEN)	2	7%
HUSBAND ONLY(RARELY)	2	7%
RESPONDENT ONLY(ALWAYS)	3	7%
RESPONDENT ONLY(MOST OFTEN)	2	7%
RESPONDENT ONLY(SOMETIMES)	5	17%
TOGETHER(ALWAYS)	10	33%
TOGETHER(SOMETIMES)	4	13%
Grand Total	30	100%
Taking loan or Keeping Mortgage		
Decision Taken By	Taking loan or mortgage	Percentage
OTHER FAMILY MEMBER(ALWAYS)	3	10%
RESPONDENT ONLY(ALWAYS)	1	3%
RESPONDENT ONLY(MOST OFTEN)	2	7%
RESPONDENT ONLY(SOMETIMES)	1	3%
TOGETHER(ALWAYS)	17	57%
TOGETHER(MOST OFTEN)	3	10%
TOGETHER(SOMETIMES)	3	10%
Grand Total	30	100%

Decision Pertaining to Social Aspects:-

The study reveals that females enjoy a lot of freedom pertaining to social issues. They take decisive role regarding visiting relatives and kinship, whereas decision regarding to children's education were taken care of by both the parents. The result is almost uniform in the study area. The tribal societies traditionally give lot of freedom to women in family related matters and the results confirm the hypothesis. The important point arising from the finding was that females in the study area were not ignored in the decision making related to social aspects. The females take independent decision relating to treatment of sick persons, visiting relatives and friends and daily cooking whereas joint decision is taken for children education.

Table:-2 Percentage Distribution of Women by Decision Making Relating to Social Aspects

Decision Taken By	Regarding Children Education	Percentage
HUSBAND ONLY(SOMETIMES)	5	17%
NO CHILD	5	17%
RESPONDENT ONLY(ALWAYS)	3	10%
RESPONDENT ONLY(MOST OFTEN)	3	10%
TOGETHER(ALWAYS)	8	27%
TOGETHER(MOST OFTEN)	3	10%
TOGETHER(RARELY)	1	3%
TOGETHER(SOMETIMES)	2	7%
Grand Total	30	100%
Treatment for Sick		
Decision Taken By	Care taken for sick time	Percentage
HUSBAND ONLY(SOMETIMES)	1	3%
OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS(ALWAYS)	6	20%
RESPONDENT ONLY(MOST OFTEN)	2	7%
RESPONDENT ONLY(SOMETIMES)	1	3%
RESPONDENT ONLY(ALWAYS)	5	17%
RESPONDENT ONLY(MOST OFTEN)	4	13%
RESPONDENT ONLY(SOMETIMES)	1	3%
TOGETHER(ALWAYS)	3	10%
TOGETHER(MOST OFTEN)	2	7%
TOGETHER(RARELY)	3	10%
TOGETHER(SOMETIMES)	2	7%
Grand Total	30	100%
Visiting Relatives		
Decision Taken By	Visiting Relative	Percentage
OTHER FAMILY MEMBER(ALWAYS)	1	3%
OTHER FAMILY MEMBER(MOST OFTEN)	2	7%
RESPONDENT ONLY(ALWAYS)	1	3%
RESPONDENT ONLY(MOST OFTEN)	1	3%
RESPONDENT ONLY(SOMETIMES)	5	17%
TOGETHER(ALWAYS)	10	33%
TOGETHER(MOST OFTEN)	2	7%
TOGETHER(RARELY)	3	10%
TOGETHER(SOMETIMES)	5	17%
Grand Total	30	100%
Daily Cooking		
Decision Taken By	Cooking decision	Percentage
OTHER FAMILY MEMBER(RARELY)	1	3%
RESPONDENT ONLY(ALWAYS)	2	7%
RESPONDENT ONLY(ALWAYS)	1	3%
RESPONDENT ONLY(ALWAYS)	6	20%
RESPONDENT ONLY(MOST OFTEN)	4	13%
RESPONDENT ONLY(RARELY)	2	7%
RESPONDENT ONLY(SOMETIMES)	5	17%
TOGETHER(ALWAYS)	6	20%
TOGETHER(MOST OFTEN)	2	7%
TOGETHER(SOMETIMES)	1	3%
Grand Total	30	100%

Source: Primary data

The findings show that the aggregate decision making role at households' level (including both economic and social decision) is very high among tribal women and male. Decision taken together. The following figure illustrates that about decision making role is high at together, autonomy at general home affairs.

2. The Relationship between Socio-Economic Status and Autonomy among Women:-

The status of women in any society and women empowerment is closely associated with each other. The status of women is determined by interplay of various socio-economic factors. Hence the following section attempts to compare the autonomy of females with respect to their socio-economic characteristics.

Education:-

Education helps in generating awareness, makes an individual well informed about the overall changes taking place all around, liberates its mind from ignorance, sharpens it for logical thinking, mobilizes and generates capacity building, and thus increases

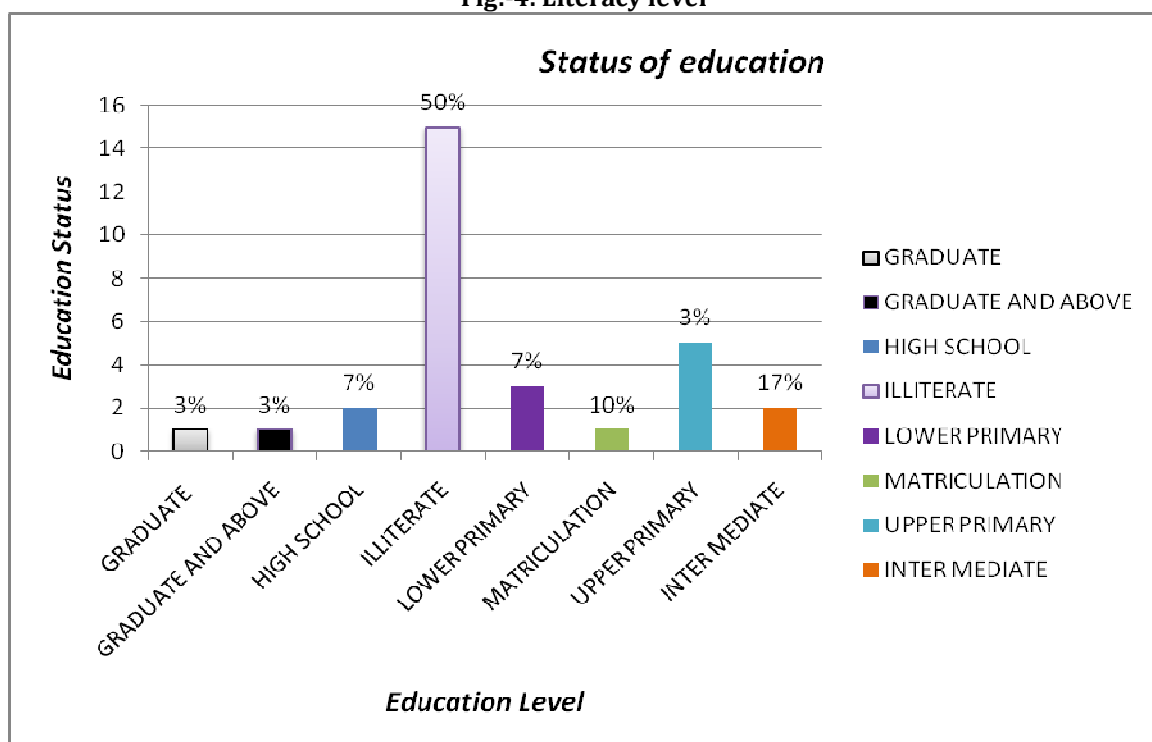
the ability to understand the problem and to take effective decision, and thus one of the key determinants affecting the autonomy of any individual.

The findings show that the literacy rate of study area is very poor. Only 50 percent of the tribal women are illiterate, 10 percent of them have complete lower primary, 7 percent of them have completed high school education, 17 percent are complete upper primary, and 3 percent are pursuing higher studies after matriculation. The education has direct impact upon autonomy. The literate individual has high autonomy power in comparison to illiterates. As the chart given below, denotes, 50 percent of literates have high decision making power, in comparison to 50 percent among illiterates.

Table:-3 Percentage of Education Level

Level of Education	Education Status	Percentage
GRADUATE	1	3%
GRADUATE AND ABOVE	1	3%
HIGH SCHOOL	2	7%
ILLITERATE	15	50%
INTER	2	7%
LOWER PRIMARY	3	10%
MATRICULATION	1	3%
UPPER PRIMARY	5	17%
Grand Total	30	100%

Fig:-4. Literacy level



Source: primary data

Among all the hamlets, the literacy rate among the women is quite low. 50 percent of them have not completed their education till high primary level. 6 percent of them are pursuing higher studies after high school and matriculation and 17 percent of the tribal women of that village are intermediate.

The tribal women of this hamlet are well informed and well aware; they play a prominent role in taking various decisions at their household and community level.

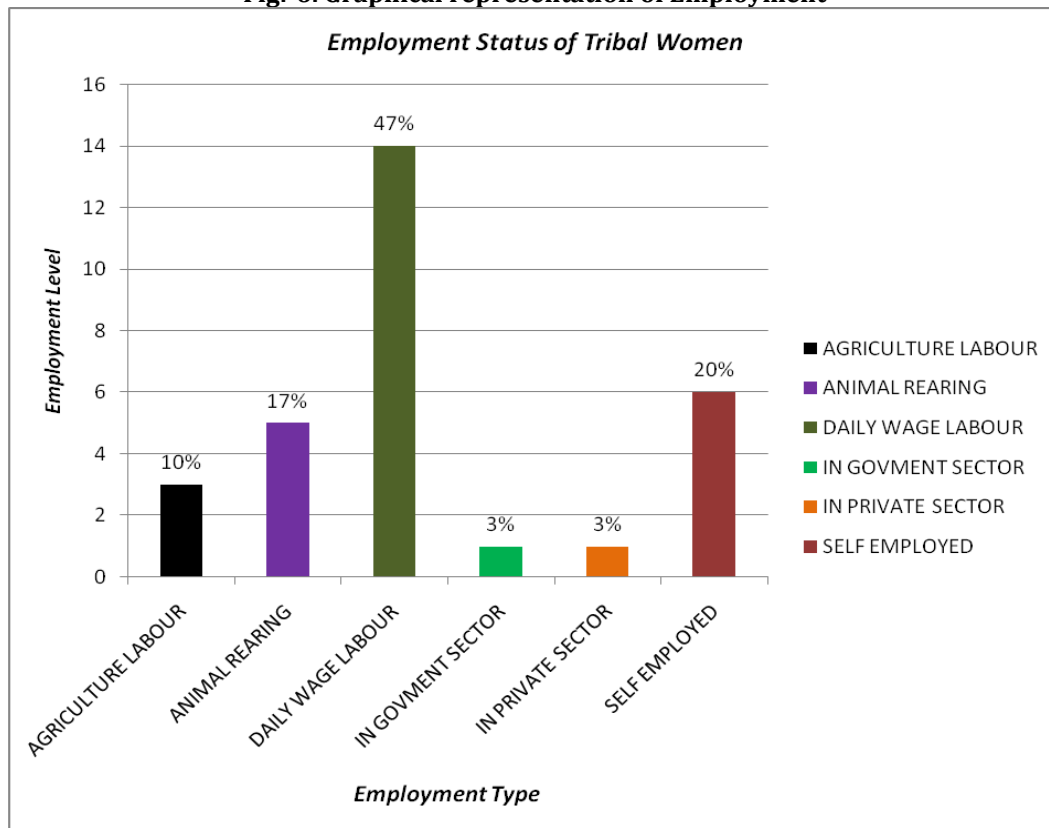
About 50 percent of women's are illiterate. But they do have considerable role in taking minor decision at household level, the reason may pertain to their tradition and culture while major decision were taken by their male counter parts.

Employment:-

The critical analysis of nature of employment helps to understand the economic liberty of the females. Economic self independence empowers the women to take its own decision. The family and society give due respect to their opinion and looks upon them for all matters. The study reveal that only 80% of the female population are employed, out of which 10 percent of them work as agricultural labour and thus have seasonal employment, 20 percent are self employed(selling handia, and forest product).and rest 47 percent are daily wage labour. Due to lack of awareness and illiteracy, the autonomy level of tribal women, in case of community participation is also low. They are not aware about new things happening around them as a result they act as mere spectator and don't play a lead role in community matters. Although the females are illiterate, they have very positive attitude towards girl's education. They have the keen desire to make their daughter highly educated. Early marriage and poverty were the main cause of low literacy rate. But most of them are self employed.

Table:-5 Status of Tribal women Employment

Employment Type	Employment Status	Percentage
AGRICULTURE LABOUR	3	10%
ANIMAL REARING	5	17%
WAGE LABOUR	14	47%
IN GOVMENT SECTOR	1	3%
IN PRIVATE SECTOR	1	3%
SELF EMPLOYED	6	20%
Grand Total	30	100%

Fig:-6. Graphical representation of Employment

As education level is high, most women are engaged as employment, as sells man in nearby shops, labourer in factories, self employed (tailoring, etc). The illiterate are also engaged in selling traditional alcohol “handia” and also as agricultural labour. The employment ratio is also high in this hamlet.

Their work has been characterized by long working hours and high physical labour. The employment has positive impacts upon women autonomy. 60 percent of the working women have high decisive power in comparison to 44 percent of unemployed females. But if we consider the decision making power as a whole, both employed and unemployed females have 98 percent of autonomy.

The main reason behind the unemployment is lack of job opportunities near their residences. More over them have house hold responsibilities. They cannot move to distance places for job opportunities. Sixty six percent of working population confirmed that they get recognition from family because of being employed.

Ownership:-

The results show that about 73 percent of the females do not possess any ownership rights. The ownership right is restricted to land ownership and having bank accounts. Only 10 percent of them have ownership of land and about 100 percent have bank accounts out of which 53 percent have joint bank accounts and 37 percent have personal accounts. Moreover about 37 percent respondents operate it by own self or else it is operated by husbands or other members of the family.

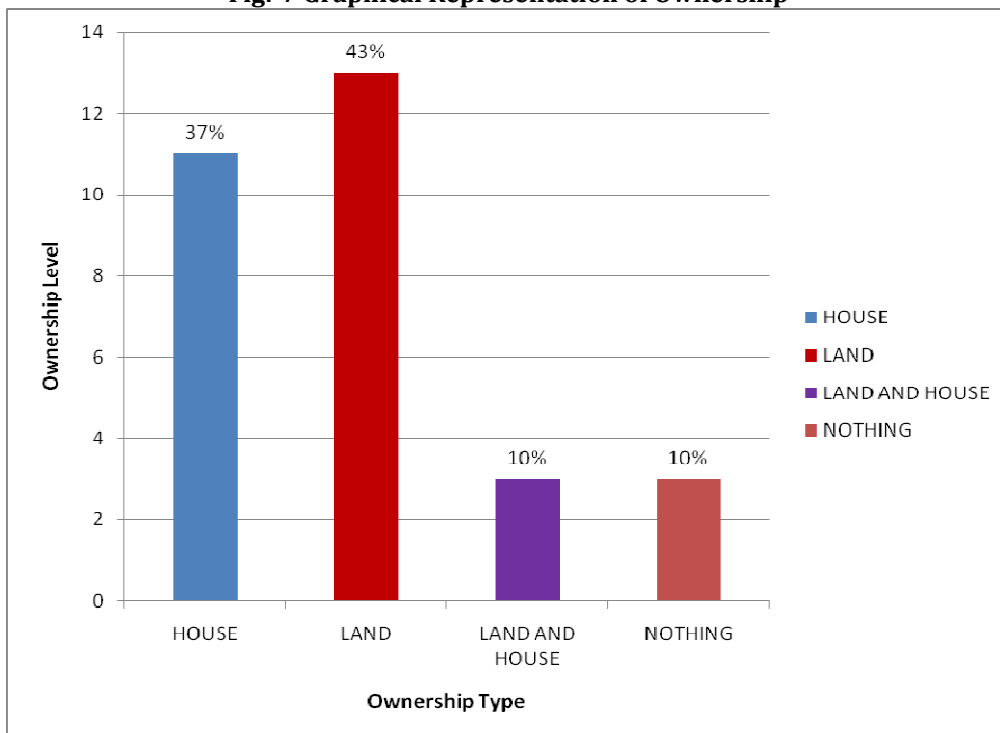
Still then the comparison between ownership holders with non-ownership holders with respect to autonomy shows that those who have some sort of ownership rights have better life than those who do not have any ownership holdings. 65 percent of owners have high decisive rights in comparison to others.

Table:-6. Percentage of Ownership and Decision making

	Assets status	Percentage
HOUSE	2	7%
LAND	3	10%
LAND AND HOUSE	3	10%
NOTHING	22	73%
Grand Total	30	100%

Bank Account status		
	BANK ACCOUNT(JOINT/PERSONAL)	Percentage
JOINT	16	53%
NO ACCOUNT	3	10%
PERSONAL	11	37%
Grand Total	30	100%
Operator of Bank Account		
Row Labels	Operator of Bank Account	Percentage
BOTH	16	53%
NO ACCOUNT	3	10%
SELF	11	37%
Grand Total	30	100%

Fig:-7 Graphical Representation of Ownership



Marital Status and Age:-

Marital status indicates whether a person is married, unmarried or a widow and this is one important factor that determines the level of autonomy among females in any community. A majority of widows who lost bread-winners of the family have taken the entire responsibility upon themselves. They have to take face insecurities, non-cooperation etc. In the study area the widows have more decision making powers in comparison to others. The unmarried females also have high decision making role in comparison to married females. Married females have to take decision pertaining to their family members and in-laws.

Fig:-8. Pie chart of Marital Status

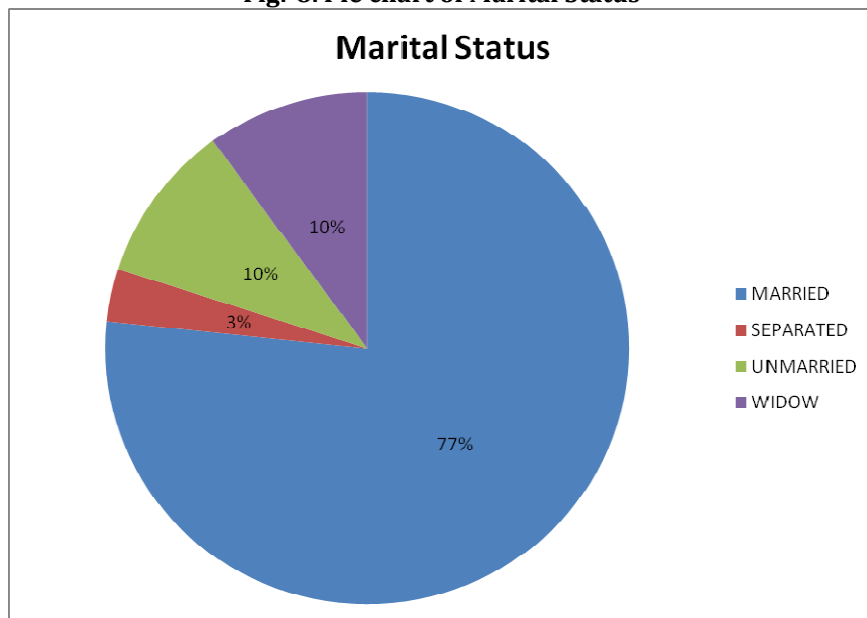
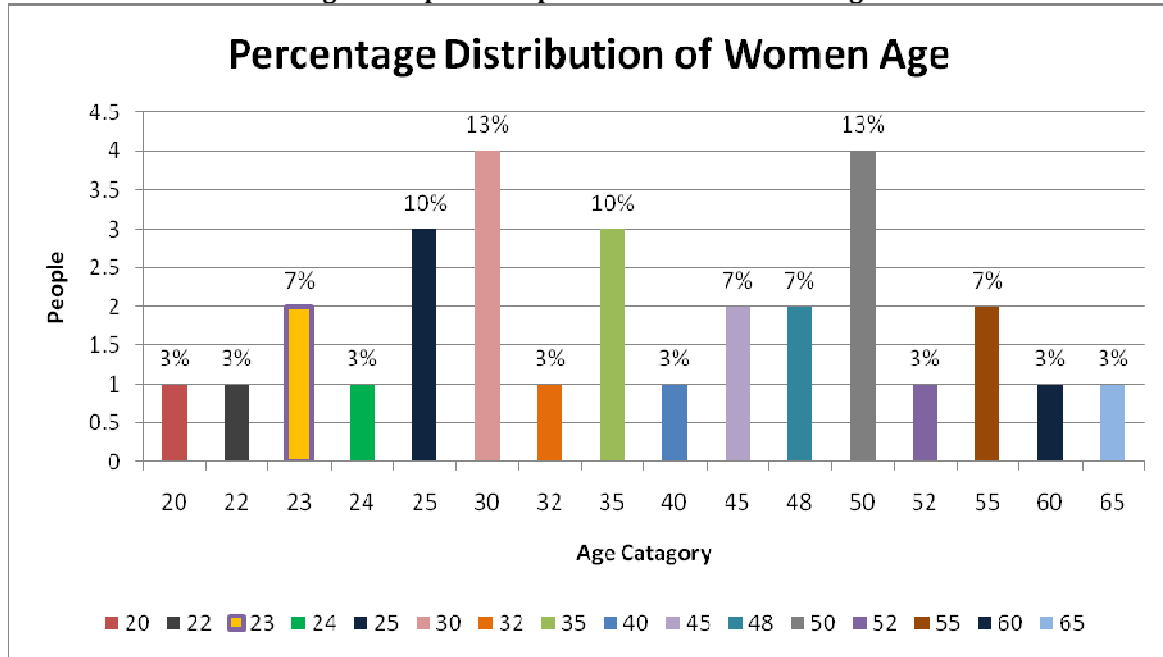


Fig:-9. Graphical Representation of Women Age

The age distribution shows that decision making power increases with increase in age. It is high among the age group, 30 - 55. The women are at the peak of their maturity, with confidence level at the highest at this age, which help them to take effective decisions.

4. MAJOR FINDINGS:-

- Results shows that decision pertaining to minor economic matters i.e. daily family expenses (40%) and their personal needs were generally taken independently by women. But the major financial decisions relating to investment, savings (33%) are taken mostly by mutual consent.
- Majority of women take decisive role regarding visiting relatives (33%) and kinship, whereas decision regarding to children's education (27%) were taken care of by both the parents.
- More than 50 percent of the tribal women are illiterate. The education has direct impact upon autonomy. 50 percent of literates have high decision making power, in comparison to 50 percent among illiterates.
- Majority of women are wage labour (47%) and self employed (20%). But if we consider the decision making power as a whole, both employed and unemployed females have 98 percent of autonomy.
- The results show that about 73 percent of the females do not possess any ownership rights. Moreover about 37 percent respondents operate it by own self or else it is operated by husbands or other members of the family. 65 percent of owners have high decisive rights in comparison to others.
- Majority of women are married (77%). Married females have to take decision pertaining to their family members and in-laws. The unmarried females also have high decision making role in comparison to married females.

Conclusion:-

The researcher drew the following conclusions from the findings of the study and theoretical propositions of the related literature. The study area is economically backward; the basic amenities of life, like housing, safe drinking water, sanitation, electricity are not available to common people. Agriculture is main source of livelihood. As there are no irrigation facilities, people mainly depend upon rain water for cultivation. Lack of alternative source of livelihood is main reason of their poverty.

The women of the study area have high decision making role in the house hold matter. They take independent decisions regarding their own expenditures, daily household expenditures, decisions pertaining to visiting kin and relatives, treatment of sick etc. They have equal decisive role with their male counterparts, regarding children's education. The finding shows that the tribal society now also continues to provide autonomy to females to the same extent that they have been doing since earlier days.

The tribal women are mostly engaged in household activities, along with it, 10 percent of them go for agricultural activities as laborers and other menial jobs to earn some livelihood. They also sell homemade alcohol *Handia*. Some of the women went in govt and private sector. Moreover they are daily wage labor and self employed. The employment ratio is compared among the three hamlets, the work participation is found to be more in this village. The employment helps in female empowerment. In this village, working women exercise better decisive power in the society.

The literacy rate among tribal women is very low. The poverty may be grounded as the main cause of low literacy rate. The girls' dropout ratio is more after primary schooling. The main reason behind it is early marriage and poverty.

Even if the females are uneducated, they have positive attitude towards girls' education. They regret for being uneducated and are willing to provide all support for their daughter's education. Education will bring awareness and enhancement in the decision making power of women.

RECOMMENDATION:-

The following suggestions/ recommendation which have policy implication emerge from the present investigation.

- Educational status of tribal women is very low with high dropout ratio. It is a matter of great concern and need to be addressed properly. It is the root cause of low autonomy among tribal women.

- To increase the female participation at the community level and to give more decision making power it is needed to understand the existing traditional pattern of tribal community in more details which would help in formulation of more effective developmental policies and it will also help to bring out the lacunae lying within present policies.
- Formulation of development policies for tribal women is not so important, as that of implementation. The main stress should be given to create awareness and to inbuilt self reliance among tribal females.
- Women should be provided with opportunities for leadership training.
- More research activities on women participation, and decision making behavior should be encouraged.
- Priority must be given to timely monitoring the improvement in their status condition.
- Women empowerment does not signify increasing the numbers of women in decision making position. There should be measures to improve the quality of participation. The quality of participation signifies taking initiatives in new projects, identifying problems and providing suggestion towards effective solution.

5. ANNEXURE

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